



**NOAA Teacher at Sea**  
**Christopher Harvey**  
**Onboard NOAA Ship OSCAR ELTON SETTE**  
**June 5 – July 4, 2006**

**Date:** June 30, 2006

**Time:** 1:00 PM Hawaii

**Location:** En route to Honolulu!

**Entry**

“Finish well.”

-Terry Harvey, my mother

-Larry Harvey, my father

(Strange they both offer the same advice!)

Everyone’s spirits seem to be up this afternoon, for good reason. The work is finally done and we are on our way back to Honolulu! The last two days I have risen from my sleepless sleep before sunrise to drink a cup of tea before work. Recently the sunrises have paled in comparison to the sunsets, and have been followed by an inundation of rain at the same time we were set to begin hauling traps. Yesterday there was lightning and thunder so heavy that some people were actually hesitant to go outside. I cooed a gentle sigh at the sign the thunderstorm, as it was a friendly reminder of summer back home in Jacksonville. It rains hard every day for about an hour around 4-5 in the afternoon, and I usually find a way to curl up in bed and listen to the storm outside. After that, the skies clear and life goes on.

We worked through the rain both mornings. From my position yesterday as a cracker I was forced to wear foul weather gear to keep me warm and dry underneath. Again, images of an orange Gumby come to mind. But it worked and, despite the rain, we finished on time. Today I ran traps between the crackers and the stackers, though I accepted the cool rain as refreshment instead of something to be avoided.

Being on the subject of finishing, I always use the quote, “Finish well” near the beginning of the semester to try to get my kids focused on the idea of completing a task to the best of their ability. I find from my own experience, as my mother constantly reminds me, I have always struggled with the idea of finishing well. Usually I find that the last part of any given task is the hardest. Most commonly, this final segment of work is the cleaning up part. And who likes to clean up anything?

It is fun to start projects. Everyone loves a fresh chance to earn good grades, do well in an athletic season, or learn how to perform well at a new job. But very few of us enjoy finishing a semester that we did not do particularly well in, participating in an athletic event that does not matter whether we win or lose, or finishing up those last two weeks after we have put in notice of quitting a job.

Those tend to be the hardest moments, in my opinion, because our heart is no longer in whatever we are doing. If we are finishing a mediocre semester of school, our mind is either on the break between semesters or on the next semester already. If we are playing in that last sporting event and we have no chance of going into the postseason, we are probably thinking about how much free time we will have available to us or how we will begin preparing for the next season. In quitting one job, most of us would already have our minds set on our next job, or at least be thinking about how to make ends meet in the time between jobs.

So I remind my kids at the very onset of the semester, especially in the fall when they are beginning their first year of high school, to finish well. Although they have four months between the first and last day of class, each day in between contributes to whether or not they finish the semester well. Franklin Covey would tell you to “Begin with the end in Mind.” In either case, it is good to think about how you plan to finish a particular task. If you plan on finishing poorly, what is the point of even beginning the undertaking in the first place?

We are nearing the end of this cruise and have completed most of the hard work. However, there are still three days separating us from land and there are still the tasks of cleaning up and packing. Already I have found myself in denial of the fact that we still have to clean up. Kenji, our chief bosun, blasted an air horn when we hauled in the last buoy. Everyone in the pit let out their own sigh, or scream, of relief at having finished our hauling for the trip, and then cleaned up and went to lunch. I was content to let this cruise be finished, and to take these last three days as the beginning of my summer vacation. Yet as I sat in the galley eating lunch, the sound of my mother’s voice came to my head. “Finish well,” she said.

We have agreed to take the rest of the afternoon off and finish cleaning everything up tomorrow. That is good because no one is in the mood to work now anyway. The sun is finally shining outside and I think I will go take a nap in its rays, listening to my music, and thinking about nothing in particular.